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Herbison, R.

# Memorial Sermon

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OF APPIN PLACE,

—BY—

*THE REV. R. HERBISON, M.A.,*

—IN—

## Stewarton Presbyterian Church.

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OTTAWA:
APRIL 28TH, 1900.

Henry J. Heagan

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*Prov. 16:31 and Job 5:26.*

**"The hoary head is a crown of glory when it is found in the way of righteousness."**

**"Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season."**

The passing of a life into the great Beyond is ever an incident that arrests our attention and gives food for contemplation. Particularly true is this of one whose life has occupied a large place and fulfilled great purposes. We measure a life very much by the influences it has engendered, by the inspiration it has given to good or evil, by the character of the works it has set on foot. We ask ourselves primarily whether a life has had any generative power, or whether on the other hand it has been merely passive and receptive. Of the life that has passed from us we are not speaking uncertainly when we say that it had in large measure this generative capacity. She lived not in the passive but the active voice. She was at the centre, not the circumference, in the relation of the community's life and progress.

I need not tell you to-day what your fathers or perhaps your grandfathers have told you, what only a few here remember, the prominent place she occupied in the early life of our city. Not only on the social side or in its public life in connection with her husband, but in every good and worthy project to ameliorate the conditions of the common life, to provide for the homeless and the destitute, and in every movement to exalt the people in righteousness and further the kingdom of her Lord and Master she was first and foremost. She was a centre of such influences, and none can ever estimate how widespread and far-reaching the effects of a life so happily situated, so richly endowed with nature's best gifts, and withal devoted to the highest and noblest purposes.

Among the many good works which owed their inception to her, we have special reason to mention here that she was the foundress of the Sabbath School, which afterwards developed into the congregation and the Church where we are worshipping to-day. It was just about a quarter of a century ago that a Sabbath School was organized and conducted in a little house on Elgin

Street belonging to Mrs. Stewart, and from there transferred to a house on McLeod Street, where the congregation was formed which afterwards occupied the present site. We feel, therefore, that we owe much as a congregation to the one who placed the first rung in the ladder of our congregational life. To her the work was not a passing fancy or a hobby thrown aside when she wearied, for her devotion and loyalty from the day of its inception to the present never faltered or failed It was to her God's work and therefore precious to her, a work that was ever upon her heart. She was ever happy to hear of its welfare, and ready also to aid so far as lay in her power its progress, loving her Church with a true Highland fervor and passion. This has meant much to us as a people in the past and we only pray that God may raise up others as faithful, loyal and devoted to God's cause among us.

Of her life in the congregation of St. Andrew's, where she worshipped for many years before the period of which I have spoken, I know so little that I cannot speak, and I only regret, as he also does himself, that the Minister of St. Andrew's could not be present to-day to add his word of

appreciation of this life that has filled so large a place in the community.

Our text expresses a thought that no doubt will come to many minds to-day, "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age like as a shock of corn cometh in his season." There is a peculiar beauty and fitness in the close of a life that has run its full course and reached the maturity of age. The blade is not trampled down or the green corn plucked, but the harvester has come when the grain was ripe and golden in the ear. Her work was done, her four score years complete, the companions of her work-days gone, her children come to mature years and occupying their own places and their own homes.

Her four score years she wore indeed as a crown of glory, her faculties up to the last few days bright and clear, her interest in all public and social and religious events keen and active ; and withal there was a grace of character about her old age that only the Christian possesses in high measure, a kindly thoughtfulness for others even in her declining days, the grace of forgetting self, and remembering others, the gift too of a

genial heart and a kindly hospitality that marked her, as one said to me, "one of the last of the old school." The phrase is, I hope, not quite correct, for we would not like to doubt the reproduction of such kindly qualities of character, yet after all it is accurate in pointing to the fact that we had one here who could be the true lady without sham or pretence or bombast of any kind, the kind, true friend and the thoughtful, charitable woman. She has shown us that even in life's higher, gayer circles, and in the midst of its more formal and less vital performances it is possible to be a true and noble Christian woman.

There are many of us, your minister among the number, who will miss the old home at Appin Place, for home is after all the circle of hearts drawn together by a personality, and from this the personality being gone we feel that the home also is broken up.

To the children and grandchildren, and other near relatives, and in special degree to her who has been the companion and comforter of the latter days of her life, we extend our sympathy, a sympathy that is all the more sincere because we

feel that your sorrow is in some measure our own. You have a lovely and beautiful life to look back upon, a life that should be to you all an inspiration to high and noble living, to pure and tender and virtuous womanhood, and to dignified and exalted manhood. "Blessed" assuredly "are the dead which die in the Lord, they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."